



RELEASE DATE: January 13, 2010
CONTACT: 2nd Deputy Chief John M. Roach



DPD UNVEILS NEW TEXT BASED CRIME FIGHTING TOOL

- **TIP 411 program allows tipsters to text info, remain anonymous**

Picture this. You see or hear something that could help police solve a crime in your neighborhood, perhaps drug activity, a home invasion, or even a murder. In the culture of “no snitchin,” you prefer to remain anonymous and are a little nervous about making a phone call that others might overhear.

Problem solved.

Anyone with a cell phone or Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) can now discreetly text anonymous and untraceable crime tip information to the Detroit Police Department (DPD) using a service called TIP 411 (847411), Chief Warren Evans announced today. The tips will come to a computer account, which will be monitored 24/7/365. Officers monitoring the account will immediately refer the tips to the appropriate unit within DPD for follow up.

#more#

The best part, Chief Evans says, is that no one, not even police, can ever find out who sent the information. Before the tip is relayed to Detroit Police, it is first sent to an independent third party and encrypted so investigators cannot see who sent it. The encryption does, however, still allow police to engage in two-way communication with a willing tipster, who will remain anonymous through the entire exchange.

“It doesn’t matter to us where the information comes from,” Chief Evans. “We just want the information so we can act on it. I want people to know that they can feel safe using this system to communicate with us directly.”

Chief Evans, who has actively sought out greater citizen participation in solving crimes, said he is excited about TIP 411 because it has unlimited potential power in fighting crime.

“This approach meets a large percentage of citizens at their level of comfort. Texting has become like breathing for a lot of people. Why not take advantage of that comfort level, along with the anonymity of TIP 411, to fight crime? People around you will have no idea if you’re tweeting, emailing your pals or quietly fighting crime.”

To promote the new program, DPD has purchased ad space on every DDOT bus and on two oversized freeway billboards at I-94/St. Aubin and I-75 north of Holbrook. It also will begin a comprehensive outreach campaign to get the word out to citizen groups, churches, schools and others starting later this month.

Chief Evans said there are two important things tipsters need to understand so their message successfully reaches.

- Because cell phones and PDAs have different keypads, send the message to **847411**, rather than spelling out “TIP.” It’s also a good idea to save the number in your contacts.
- Since other police departments also use the TIP 411 service, the message portion of each crime tip **must start with the letters “DPD”** to ensure that it is routed to the Detroit Police Department.

TIP 411 doesn’t replace 911

Chief Evans also pointed out that TIP 411 is not meant to be used instead of calling 911. *“TIP 411 is designed to let people give us information about crimes that have occurred in the recent past, not something that is happening now,”* he said. *“For a crime in progress, people should always call 911 for immediate response.”*

The Chief said that he expects the TIP 411 service to become a significant and ongoing part of his department’s crime fighting work.

“This is going to be a sustained effort and we want to reach out to people in as many ways as possible, whether it’s at church, at school or on a bus,” Chief Evans said. *“Ultimately, it is our citizens who are going to solve crimes by providing us the information we need.”*

PR 10-03

For further information, please contact the Office of Public Information at 313-596-2200.